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Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: women in development

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Ms. Ulrika Cronenberg-Mossberg (Sweden), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.27

Women in development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 52/195 of 18 December 1997, 54/210 of 22 December 1999 and 56/188 of 21 December 2001 and all its other resolutions on the integration of women in development, and the relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions, including those on women in the economy,[1] adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling also the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[2]

Reaffirming the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[3] which affirms that the equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured, and calls for, inter alia, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women as being effective and essential in the combat of poverty, hunger and disease and in stimulating development that is truly sustainable,

Reaffirming also that gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and recent United Nations conferences, and that investing in the development of women and girls has a multiplier effect, in particular on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth,

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[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 7* (E/1997/27), chap. I, sect. C.1, agreed conclusions 1997/3.

[2] Resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex.

[3] See resolution 55/2.

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Recognizing the significant contribution that women make to the economy and the major force that they represent for change and development in all sectors of the economy, especially in key areas such as agriculture, industry and services,

Reaffirming that women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace, and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

Recognizing that population and development issues, education and training, health, nutrition, the environment, water supply, sanitation, housing, communications, science and technology and employment opportunities are important elements for effective poverty eradication and the advancement and empowerment of women,

Recognizing also, in this context, the importance of respect for all human rights, including the right to development, and of a national and international environment that promotes, inter alia, justice, gender equality, equity, civil and political participation and political freedom for the advancement and empowerment of women,

Recognizing further that equal access to education and training, in particular in business, trade, administration, information and communication technologies and other new technologies, is essential for gender equality, the empowerment of women and poverty eradication,

Recognizing that the difficult socio-economic conditions that exist in many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, have resulted in the acceleration of the feminization of poverty and that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty,

Recognizing also that poverty eradication and the achievement and preservation of peace are mutually reinforcing, and recognizing further that peace is inextricably linked to equality between women and men and to development,

Aware that, while globalization and liberalization processes have created employment opportunities for women in many countries, they have also made women, especially in developing countries and in particular in the least developed countries, more vulnerable to problems caused by increased economic volatility,

Recognizing that some effects of market liberalization may deepen the socio-economic marginalization of women in the agricultural sector, inter alia, through the loss of employment among small-scale farmers who are more likely to be women than men, and emphasizing that women who are small-scale farmers need special support and empowerment so as to be able to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities of agricultural market liberalization,

Recognizing also that enhanced trade opportunities for developing countries, inter alia, through trade liberalization, will improve the economic condition of those societies, including women, which is of particular importance in rural communities,

Aware that, while women represent an important and growing proportion of business owners, their contribution to economic and social development is constrained by, inter alia, the lack of equal access of women and men to, and control over, credit, technology, support services, land and information,

Concerned that the continuing discrimination against women, the denial or lack of equal rights and access to education, training and credit facilities, and the lack of control over land, capital, technology and other areas of production impede their full and equal contribution to, and equal opportunity to benefit from, development,

Emphasizing the promotion of programmes aimed at financial intermediation with a view to ensuring the access of rural women to credit and to agricultural inputs and implements and, in particular, to easing collateral requirements for access to finance by women,

Expressing its concern about the underrepresentation of women in economic decision-making, and stressing the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of all policies,

Noting the importance of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular its funds and programmes, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, in facilitating the advancement of women in development, and recognizing the work done by the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The empowerment of women and integration of gender perspectives in the promotion of economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development";[4]

2. *Reaffirms* the goals and commitments contained in the Beijing Declaration[5] and Platform for Action[6] and also in the political declaration[7] and further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[8] adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session;

3. *Calls upon* Governments, the relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, and all relevant actors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to continue to take effective action to achieve full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;

4. *Stresses* the importance of creating a favourable and conducive national and international environment in all fields of life for the effective integration of women in development;

5. *Urges* all Governments to develop and promote strategies to mainstream a gender perspective in the design and implementation of economic and development policies, and in the monitoring and evaluation of related programmes of action;

6. *Recognizes* the need to mainstream a gender perspective in budget policies at all levels and calls upon Governments to increase women's full and equal

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[4] A/58/135.

[5] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] Resolution S-23/2, annex.

[8] Resolution S-23/3, annex.

participation in economic decision-making through, inter alia, their engagement in the budgetary process;

7. *Also recognizes* the mutually reinforcing links between gender equality and poverty eradication, as well as the need to elaborate and implement, where appropriate, in consultation with civil society, comprehensive gender-sensitive poverty eradication strategies that address social, structural and macroeconomic issues;

8. *Further recognizes* the need to strengthen the capacity of Governments to incorporate a gender perspective in policies and decision-making, and encourages all Governments, international organizations, including the United Nations system, and other relevant stakeholders, to assist and support developing countries in integrating a gender perspective in all aspects of policy-making, inter alia, through the provision of technical assistance and financial resources;

9. *Stresses* the importance of developing national strategies for the promotion of sustainable and productive entrepreneurial activities that will generate income among disadvantaged women and women living in poverty;

10. *Urges* all Governments to ensure women's equal rights with men and their full and equal access to education, training, employment, technology and economic and financial resources, including credit, in particular for rural women and women in the informal sector, and to facilitate, where appropriate, the transition of women from the informal to the formal sector;

11. *Encourages* Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society to promote and protect the rights of women workers and to take action to remove structural and legal barriers as well as stereotypic attitudes to gender equality at work, and to initiate positive steps to promote equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;

12. *Urges* all Governments to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women with regard to their access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, giving special attention to poor, uneducated women, and to support women's access to legal assistance;

13. *Calls upon* Governments and entrepreneurial associations to facilitate the access of women, including young women and women entrepreneurs, to education and training in business, administration and information and communication technologies;

14. *Recognizes* the role of microfinance, including microcredit, in the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and the generation of employment, and in this regard notes the importance of sound national financial systems and encourages the strengthening of existing and emerging microcredit institutions and their capacities, inter alia, through the support of international financial institutions;

15. *Stresses* the need for assistance to enable women in developing countries, particularly grass-roots women's groups, to have full access to and use of new technologies, including information technologies, for their empowerment;

16. *Urges* States to design and revise laws that ensure that women are accorded full and equal rights to own land and other property, inter alia, through

inheritance, and to undertake administrative reforms and other necessary measures to give women the same right as men to credit, capital and appropriate technologies and access to markets and information;

17. *Calls upon* Governments to encourage the financial sector to mainstream a gender perspective in its policies and programmes, in particular by:

(a) Exploring viable options with respect to reaching people living in poverty, in particular women, inter alia, through international public and/or private funds;

(b) Designing savings schemes that are attractive to the poor and to poor women in particular;

(c) Undertaking research to learn more about the characteristics, financial needs and performance of businesses owned by women;

(d) Working towards equal treatment for women clients through comprehensive gender-awareness training for staff at all levels and better representation of women in decision-making positions;

18. *Requests* Governments to ensure the full and equal participation of women in decision-making and in policy formulation and implementation at all levels so that their priorities, skills and potentials can be adequately reflected in national policy;

19. *Calls upon* Governments to promote, inter alia, through legislation, family-friendly and gender-sensitive work environments and to also promote the facilitation of breastfeeding for working mothers as well as the provision of the necessary care for working women's children and other dependants, and to consider promoting policies and programmes, as appropriate, to enable men and women to reconcile their work, social and family responsibilities;

20. *Expresses its concern* that the HIV/AIDS pandemic reinforces gender inequalities and that women and girls bear a disproportionate share of the burden imposed by the HIV/AIDS crisis, that they are more easily infected, that they play a key role in care and that they have become more vulnerable to poverty as a result of the HIV/AIDS crisis;

21. *Calls upon* the international community to make efforts to mitigate the effects of excess volatility and economic disruption, which have a disproportionately negative impact on women, and to enhance trade opportunities for developing countries in order to improve the economic conditions of women;

22. *Urges* the international community, the United Nations system and relevant organizations to give priority to assisting the efforts of developing countries to ensure the full and effective participation of women in deciding and implementing development strategies and integrating gender concerns into national programmes, inter alia, by providing adequate resources to operational activities for development in support of the efforts of Governments to ensure, inter alia, full and equal access of women to health care, capital, education, training and technology, as well as full and equal participation in all decision-making;

23. *Recognizes* that a substantial increase in official development assistance and other resources will be required if developing countries are to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] and that to build support for official

development assistance, cooperation will be needed in further improving policies and development strategies, both nationally and internationally, so as to enhance aid effectiveness;

24. *Urges* developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product of developed countries to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and encourages developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help achieve development goals and targets, and also acknowledges the efforts of all donors, commends those donors whose official development assistance contributions exceed, reach or are increasing towards the targets, and underlines the importance of undertaking to examine the means and time frames for achieving the targets and goals;

25. *Encourages* the international community, the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society to continue to provide the necessary financial resources to assist national Governments in their efforts to meet the development targets and benchmarks agreed upon at the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Second World Assembly on Ageing, the twenty-third and twenty-fourth special sessions of the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations conferences and summits;

26. *Encourages* the United Nations system and international and regional organizations, as appropriate, to assist Governments, at their request, in building institutional capacity and developing national action plans or further implementing existing action plans for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;

27. *Urges* Governments to create and maintain a non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive legal environment by reviewing legislation with a view to striving to remove discriminatory provisions as soon as possible, preferably by 2005, and eliminating legislative gaps that leave women and girls without protection of their rights and without effective recourse against gender-based discrimination, and encourages assistance to countries in achieving this aim;

28. *Urges* multilateral donors, and invites international financial institutions within their respective mandates and regional development banks, to review and implement policies to support national efforts to ensure that a higher proportion of resources reach women, in particular in rural and remote areas;

29. *Welcomes* the convening of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005, and encourages Governments and all other stakeholders to integrate a gender perspective in the preparatory processes and outcome documents, taking into account the agreed conclusions on the participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/44 of 22 July 2003, and the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General;

30. *Encourages* Governments, international organizations, including the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society to fully incorporate a gender perspective into the implementation of and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development and to implement the specific recommendations on microfinance and microcredit for women and gender budget policies;

31. *Stresses* the importance of collecting all relevant information needed on the role of women in development and statistics disaggregated by sex by all countries, and encourages the relevant entities of the United Nations to support national efforts, especially those of developing countries, and, in this regard, invites developed countries, relevant entities of the United Nations and other international organizations to provide support and assistance to developing countries, upon their request, with respect to establishing, developing and strengthening their databases and information systems, and also encourages all Governments and international organizations, including the United Nations system, to collect information needed on the role of women in development and the disaggregation by sex of all statistics;

32. *Urges* all Governments and international organizations, including the United Nations system, to incorporate a gender perspective in their planning and evaluation, inter alia, in common country assessments, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist;

33. *Encourages* the involvement, as appropriate, of relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society, in mainstreaming a gender perspective in planning and evaluation;

34. *Calls upon* the United Nations system to integrate gender mainstreaming into all its programmes and policies, inter alia, in the integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences, in accordance with agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997,[9] and welcomes the decision of the Council to devote one of the two themes of the coordination segment of its substantive session of 2004 to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of those agreed conclusions;

35. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to update the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, noting that the survey should focus, as in the past, on selective emerging development issues that have an impact on the role of women in the economy at the national, regional and international levels;

36. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, including the impact of globalization on the empowerment of women and their integration in development;

37. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the sub-item entitled "Women in development".

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[9] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV.A, para. 4.